

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L TAIPEI 1206

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ETRD, EINV, TW, CH, US
SUBJECT: ROC-US ECONOMIC COUNCIL

REF: (A) TAIPEI 712, (B) STATE 46616

1. ROC-US ECONOMIC COUNCIL WAS FORMALLY INAUGURATED FEBRUARY 26. MINISTER OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS Y.S. SUN WAS FEATURED SPEAKER. SUN STATED THAT COUNCIL WOULD WORK TO PROMOTE TRADE AND INVESTMENT BETWEEN US AND ROC AND WOULD PROVIDE A FORUM FOR ROC BUSINESSMEN TO DISCUSS MATTERS OF COMMON INTEREST AND CONCERN WITH BUSINESSMEN IN US. MINISTER STRESSED FACT THAT COUNCIL, LIKE ITS COUNTERPART IN US, WAS TO BE NON-POLITICAL AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL. EMBASSY WAS REPRESENTED BY TRADE CENTER DEPUTY DIRECTOR AND COMMERCIAL OFFICER. FORMER READ FOLLOWING SHORT STATEMENT FROM AMBASSADOR WHO HAD BEEN INVITED TO ATTEND BUT DECLINED:

QUOTE: ON THE OCCASION OF TODAY'S INAUGURATION OF THE ROC-USA ECONOMIC COUNCIL I WISH TO EXTEND MY BEST WISHES FOR ITS SUCCESS. LIKE ITS COUNTERPART ORGANIZATION IN THE UNITED STATES, THE COUNCIL, COMPOSED AS IT IS OF DISTINGUISHED REPRESENTATIVES OF THE PRIVATE BUSINESS
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COMMUNITY, CAN PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN WORKING FOR THE PROMOTION OF TRADE AND ECONOMIC COOPERATION. BUSINESSMEN WORLD-WIDE SHARE COMMON INTERESTS AND IT IS ONLY PROPER THAT THEY SHOULD ESTABLISH ORGANIZATIONS THE PURPOSE OF WHICH IS TO PROVIDE A FORUM FOR DISCUSSING AND FURTHERING THOSE INTERESTS, FOR SHARING INFORMATION, AND FOR THE PLEASURES OF FELLOWSHIP. WE WISH YOU WELL IN YOUR

ENDEAVORS. END QUOTE.

2. ACCORDING TO K.H. WU, SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE CHINA EXTERNAL TRADE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL, AND NEWLY-ELECTED SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE ROC-US ECONOMIC COUNCIL, THE COUNCIL ALREADY HAS 242 MEMBERS WITH MORE JOINING DAILY. AT A MEETING HELD MARCH 2, THE MEMBERS ELECTED T.K. CHANG, CHAIRMAN OF THE CHUNG HSIN BILLS FINANCE CORPORATION, AS CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL AND WU AS SECRETARY-GENERAL. IN ADDITION TO CHANG, THE FOLLOWING WERE ELECTED FOR TWO-YEAR TERMS AS DIRECTORS: T.S. LIN, CHAIRMAN OF TATUNG COMPANY; C.F. KOO, CHAIRMAN OF TAIWAN CEMENT CORPORATION, Y.C. WANG, CHAIRMAN OF FORMOSA PLASTICS CORPORATION; VIVIAN WU, CHAIRMAN OF TAI YUEN TEXTILE COMPANY; M.P. CHEN, CHAIRMAN OF SANPO ELECTRONICS CORPORATION; K.P. YANG, CHAIRMAN OF NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CHINESE SHIPOWNERS; CLIFF LOUIE, CHAIRMAN OF CHINA AIRLINES; J.T. CHANG, PRESIDENT OF CHINA TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION. C.C. CHING, CHAIRMAN OF THE GENERAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OF THE REPUBLIC OF CHINA, WAS ELECTED TO THE POSITION OF STANDING SUPERVISOR.

3. ACCORDING TO THE ECONOMIC NEWS OF MARCH 2, T.K. CHANG REPORTEDLY HAS STATED THAT THE ROC-US ECONOMIC COUNCIL WILL PROPOSE TO ITS US COUNTERPART THAT JOINT MEETINGS BE HELD SEMI-ANNUALLY, WITH ONE IN TAIPEI AND THE OTHER IN CHICAGO. TO FACILITATE COORDINATION BETWEEN THE TWO COUNCILS, ACCORDING TO CHANG, THE ROC ORGANIZATION HAS INVITED WILLIAM MORELL, NEWLY-APPOINTED EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE US-ROC ECONOMIC COUNCIL, TO VISIT TAIWAN. MORELL PROBABLY WILL COME IN LATE MARCH.

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4. EMBASSY UNDERSTANDS FULLY DEPARTMENT'S WISH TO AVOID IMPRESSION OF USG INVOLVEMENT WITH EITHER COUNCIL. NO OFFICIAL PERSONNEL WILL ACCEPT MEMBERSHIP, IF OFFERED, IN ANY CLASS.

5. COMMENT: EMBASSY CONTINUES TO IMPRESS UPON GROC DESIRABILITY THAT ROC-US ECONOMIC COUNCIL BE NON-POLITICAL. AS RECENTLY AS FEBRUARY 25, AMBASSADOR MENTIONED TO MINISTER SUN HIS CONVICTION THAT THE LESS GROC PARTICIPATION IN THE COUNCIL, THE BETTER. MINISTER SAID HE UNDERSTOOD AMBASSADOR'S POINT, BUT WHETHER HE OR OTHER GROC OFFICIALS DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN.

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